

**Meeting Date:** March 22, 2018

**Agenda Item No. 11**

**Agenda Item:** Grizzly Bear Hunting Opportunity

**Bureau Chief Approval:**

**Prepared by:** Toby Boudreau

**Background:**

The greater Yellowstone population of grizzly bears was delisted in June 2017. The conservation strategy for Yellowstone grizzlies allows for take of bears when the population estimate is greater than 600 bears. Hunting is a management tool consistent with the conservation strategy and bear conservation. The 2017 population estimate is 718 bears. The states of Wyoming, Montana and Idaho all share management responsibilities for grizzly bears in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem (GYE). Through a memorandum of agreement developed by the 3 states, hunter harvest is to be allocated; 58% to Wyoming, 34% to Montana, and 8% to Idaho. The allocation is based on the percentage of land area of each state inside the designated monitoring area not counting National Park Service lands. The harvestable number of bears is calculated by subtracting the previous year's total mortality from the maximum allowable mortality limit for each demographic class. If the result is a positive number, then that number of bears can be allocated to the 3 states by the previously mentioned percentages. The calculated harvestable number of bears for 2018 is 19 total bears in the GYE with 17 males and 2 females allowed for harvest. Applying the allocation gives Wyoming 10 males, Montana 6 males, and Idaho 1 male bear to harvest in 2018.

**Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:**

The Commission has already created a framework in the Idaho Administrative Code sections 13 01.06 and 13 01.08 to allow the establishment of a hunting season for grizzly bears. Those rules include what sex and ages can be harvested, tag validation procedures, evidence of sex requirements, grizzly bear reporting requirements, a mandatory check established for harvested bears, and grizzly bears added to the list of species not allowed to be hunted within 200 yards of a landfill or dump.

**Public Involvement Process:**

This agenda item is for Commission information.

**Justification:**

Hunting grizzly bears is consistent with the conservation strategy and, based on the 2018 allocation, Idaho has the opportunity to harvest one male bear.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff recommends the Commission direct the Department to gather public input on a grizzly bear hunting season framework in anticipation of a possible Fall 2018 Idaho grizzly bear season.